

# REWRITE



## The Magazine of Effective Writing

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### YOU ARE HEIRS TO A GREAT TRADITION

Some time ago the Staten Island TRANSCRIPT ran an editorial that intimated that "freedom of the press" might depend as much upon the press as public officials and persons active in public life. The paper hinted broadly that sensational headlines, biased news-reporting and editorials make those who make the news unwilling to reveal all they otherwise could. The paper cited particularly as a vital danger the hysteria born of investigations and crime commissions, the dangers of minority groups being "smeared" by other groups and the press fanning the flames and pouring oil on the fire through unwise loyalties to policies of pre-judging by reason of eagerness to get the news at any cost.

Freedom of the Press? The TRANSCRIPT made its point by re-affirming the need for fair treatment and courageously honest reporting on a creative and intelligently progressive basis. That is something that every writer, from the cradle to the grave, should always keep in mind. The power to write in public, to stand up and be heard in meeting, is one that commits you to a great responsibility.

A friend and I were sitting together at a Town Meeting recently. He commented on what an easy thing it is for a "sidewalk engineer" to rise and pop off about something he knows nothing about. The next day our postmaster, in discussing the results of the Meeting, inquired if I had noticed that a taxpayer who had asked for an explanation of Article I in the Warrant, had received a very lucid, detailed explanation of Article 21. And when the Town official asked, "Does that answer your question?" the taxpayer agreed that it did!

If all of us remained silent until assured that we knew whereof we speak, most of us, I am afraid, would not need typewriters. The point is, though, that each time we write a news story or a feature, each time we interview someone, we are representing the Press for better or for worse. I remember once in my reporting days when I talked for 2 hours with a man before I won his confidence, and persuaded him to give me the story I sought. As a result of my story, he was able to open up a line of credit, which he had not managed to do previously. On that occasion I had done a good job. On another I did not do so well because I was a green cub. I was sent out to get the picture of a young boy. The night before he'd been riding around with a group of 'teen-agers. It was late; they had had a few drinks (pop or liquor?) They went in swimming. He got cramps, drowned. A re-

porter for another paper put the sensational implications into his story. When I asked for a picture the family was ready to kill all reporters. Their kid was clean, decent. I promised I would do what I could to get a correct report into our paper. I got a picture. I told the city editor, I told our reporter what I thought. But the next day the paper repeated the opinion of the one across the street. I never went back to see the family. I should have. I could have done something to make freedom of the press more secure. The editors of those two stories made it harder for themselves to get the facts on some later story. By handling a minor story in a routine manner and allowing the available facts to imply more than they probably should, these editors unconsciously tripped the pendulum of public opinion in the direction of sentiment that all reporters are cynical and editors like to play up every possible sensation.

A reporter's life tends to make him cynical. He meets every type of person, good & bad, of high and low degree. The fact that a person has wealth, position and aristocratic background, does not inevitably mean that he has exemplary character. Life is complex and the basic values often confused & crossed up. A newspaperman is usually working against time; and, moreover, after you've reported the day's news for a certain time it is apparent that, with endless slight variations, you are handling the same old facts and stories. Love, Money, Greed, Ambition & their opposites, including Covetousness, Revenge are the primary motives sparking men's activities. And all too often, the virtuous responses to life are not considered dramatic; or worth only a humorous or sentimental "box" or space-filling feature.

Point I wish to make is that newspapers & cops are usually thought of in terms of negatives. (Right now, the politicians are getting the same treatment, and few of them realize it is their own fault.) You have to be a police reporter to appreciate the immense possibilities, if honestly put into practice, of that old cliché: "Kid, a cop is your best friend." It is in that spirit that I'd like to drive home to every member of the WCS Family of writers the responsibility that is & can be his or hers. You have the power to be a purveyor of truth. You can materially aid those whose stories you cover, by making it possible for the general public to appreciate their job and position of usefulness in the world. You can right past wrongs; you're able to give added impetus to the big, constructive deeds that are being done in this world. Most of all you can continually write the adventure of positive living as against that of destruction, revenge and old world, persistent hatreds and fear-motivated persecutions of minority groups. You do not have to be a little Sir Galahad, or Pollyanna, or even a tin saint on wheels. You just need to be an honest, objective writer in love with your calling. It can be a noble one.

### Everything Is Possible

Invention is the doing of the new thing in the obvious way. After an invention has been made, we then see that it was the obvious way; there was nothing unusual in it.

It was only our inhibited mind that kept us from seeing this self-evident answer from the very first. —James F. Lincoln; *Incentive Management*.

Good Business

## REWRITE

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<u>MAKE</u>	<u>William E. Harris,</u>	<u>KEEP</u>
<u>THE FREE</u>	<u>Elva Ray Harris,</u>	<u>AMERICA</u>
<u>WORLD STRONG</u>	<u>Editors.</u>	<u>CLEAN</u>

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS—we cannot be responsible for changes not received in this office ONE MONTH in advance of taking effect. Whenever possible, please give exact date of change. PROMPT RENEWALS save our time, permit us to publish a better magazine, and bring you an increased value for your money.

URGE YOUR FRIENDS TO SUBSCRIBE. As a matter of policy we accept no advertising. This allows us to report the entire field of writing and selling impartially for your best interests. Therefore, we need support from as many writers and friends as possible in order to give you a better, more dynamic magazine. REWRITE is your magazine. Use it.

### A TIME FOR GREATNESS THIS YEAR!

In this month when we celebrate our independence, we need to hark back to our forefathers' commonsense, practicality, and integrity in the face of a world situation as insecure as our own. They did what had to be done realistically with courage and faith in the eternal verities. We should do the same. Our leaders might well take a leaf from history.

Already, the tougher policy REWRITE advocated towards the Soviets shows signs which are unmistakable, that it can prove we mean business. On the other hand, the developing political campaigns and the struggle between management and labor for overwhelming power steadily deteriorated during the past month. The Republican internecine strife which has been killing off two good men at a time when the Nation needs all the strength & leadership and intelligent cooperation for common good, has been at once silly and pitiful. It has been a pre-Convention campaign that will surely go down in history as the worst managed in all our national lifetime. No trace of statesmanship, naturally. But it did not even display any sense of good politics.

For Eisenhower we can only have the utmost respect and sympathy. A man, obviously, honest, courageous, but lacking the experience and the skills necessary for a great office. Trying to feel his way and learn to be president overnight. An impossible task. And yet

if he is left alone, if his ill-advised and self-seeking backers could leave him alone, and could absorb some of his fine concern for the welfare of his country, he might well be best of a harum-scarum lot.

It is a strangely bitter irony that on the athletic field we Americans worship "greatness" of heart, but in politics and industry we must be content with power-mad egocentrics and little caesars, who put their own interests ahead of the Country's. How long must we wait for men to realize that unselfish good will and statesman-like ability to get good things done are the smartest kind of politics? That is what will get out the independent vote!

### FIRST REPORT ON THE PHILA. CONFERENCE

We had a great conference. It was probably the largest in 4 years. Several hundreds of writers. And certainly in my groups, the most responsive students I have ever taught. An exciting experience. And a busy one! I led off the informal speaking at the opening dinner, led the Short Story Group, took over at short notice the Creative Writing Group for those with daytime jobs, and was interviewed on an hour-long breakfast radio show and a half-hour TV luncheon show. Paul Lavallee, "Band of America" bandmaster, was the other interviewee on that one. (We offer thanks to Mary Wilson of PTZ for a wonderful luncheon and congratulate her on the show's 1st birthday on July 13th, Billy Gee's birthday. Afterwards, in New Hope, Pa., I saw the movie, "My Six Convicts" and at the Bucks Cty. Playhouse an almost perfect Broadway production of Moss Hart's "Lady in the Dark", directed unofficially by the author, with his talented wife, Kitty Carlisle, in the lead role a busman's holiday, truly, to remember a long while. In spare moments I held a number and variety of personal conferences, and talked with editors, whose ms. needs or wise generalizations are reported here and elsewhere, partly in this issue, more extensively in the August issue. So, plan to be in Philadelphia next year! A very well run Conference.

FARM JOURNAL, Pearl Patterson, Washington Sq., Phila. 5, Pa. Pearl Patterson told us, over lunch, some of the difficulties of her limited market for fiction. Using only 1 story a month, she has to plan for a balanced, varied diet. If she uses a character story, she can't repeat that type too soon again. A great many writers, however, do send her the same kind immediately after she has published a particular type. She is interested, she says, in Entertainment primarily. Her readers, although farm family folk, want to see their world in its true perspective. That's why Elva noticed an armed services story recently and I a story about windmills in Texas. "I'd look carefully at a good young love story, if it weren't puppy love," she said. But that doesn't mean she would buy several of them all at once. Pearl Patterson is very friendly and—popular with Phila. writers.

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### DO YOU ACHIEVE SELF-CONFIDENCE?

John Galsworthy once used a phrase, which we have quoted before in REWRITE. It is in "The Forsyte Saga". It reads: "That secret sense of self-importance without which none of us can endure to exist." He used it memorably in connection with the unfortunate, & almost tragic, Somes Forsyte. In a sense it applies to all writers.

For if you cannot make a story seem important to yourself you cannot make it seem important to anyone else. And if you can't develop within yourself a feeling that you're important and the job you are doing is more than worthwhile, you won't be able to prove it to an editor. I used to be on the "sidelines" of the theater, so to speak, and I've watched the tragicomic sight of frightened or thinly talented youngsters trying to sell themselves as actors to hard-boiled managers and producers. You see them walk into a manager's office and try to make noises like a star. Or they read a script at sight in the glare of the lights on a bare stage, with a circle of hostile competitors watching disdainfully their every move. Sometimes, they are no longer youngsters; they are old hams still trying to make the grade. But old, or young, it takes real guts when you are shaking in your shoes, or perhaps aware that you haven't enough stuff on the ball, to wade in and make them think you have that confidence that makes you master of your material, your medium and the folk that you are trying ever so hard to please.

Of course it helps to have your show documented. If you're writing an article, to have all the facts; if you're writing a story, to really know and understand your characters. The actors have a saying that you can do anything with good material; without it, you're licked. That is not quite true because there are also the factors of technique, and, more important, the human spirit. Yesterday I was working out with Lunenburg's Little Leaguers and during a practice game a tiny little 8-year old came up to bat. Some of the bigger boys began to jeer good naturedly. But the kid crowded the plate. With a bat which was much too heavy for him, he hit a routine pop fly to the infield. Nevertheless, he really dug for first, and when everyone volunteered to take it and—dropped it, all hands around, he lit out for second, took third in the confusion he managed to stir up, & came home on an infield dribble. He was puny, but he really knew his stuff and was determined to do it. He manufactured conviction right-out-of-nothing.

The fellow who can walk into an editor's office and be "successful" in appearance, and execution, is one in a million. Most of us, professionals and amateurs alike, I can assure you, have to manufacture our "sense of self-importance". That means that you've got to be both subjective and objective in your approach to the job of writing. You need to

put feeling and determination into each job you do, but also be able to stand off & appraise it with detachment. Very few persons succeed in being both creative and critical equally well. But unless you possess the ability to put yourself wholeheartedly into a stint of writing and at the same time stand off to view the effect on the reader, you'll fail to achieve the full punch.

The person who just sits down and writes, is never as effective as the one who writes with calculated effect, provided the latter can put a feeling of genuineness into writing. This may sound like a subtlety, but it is what every actor has to do in every performance. He has to build a little world of real illusion, to simulate reality while keeping his mind on what he is doing. While he is making ardent love to the heroine he has to remember to keep his arm at just the correct position on her back; he has to avoid, with the utmost care, blacking out her face with his shoulder, or turning himself around where the audience cannot see him effectively.

Such preoccupation with the minutiae & artifices of a story can easily render a writer cynical. You can speak practically or you speak cynically about a story being about two fellows and a girl. In the first case you're recognizing the limitations of your pattern and keeping within them. In the second, you are allowing yourself to be limited to canvas and paint instead of the wide blue sky, which they represent.

In other words, you must see the skeleton yet have the faith, sense of believing, which is the very root and core of that secret sense of self-importance. If you believe your story is real, you have taken the first step in making it so. But if you can believe in it, yet view it without illusions just because it happens to be your brain-child, you've taken an even more important step. You will, then, be able to look at it clear-eyed and see in it many of its weaknesses. Still having the original faith in it, you will be able, and willing, patiently to build it up, pull out of it those rejection factors.

With most of us the job is to develop the faculty of alternating between writer & objective critic. That is a hard task, but it can be done. And we are better writers when we learn to do it. It is what every parent, I imagine, has to do when he or she notices that the child he loves with a consuming passion is not perfect and must be helped to be a better human being. I tell students, when they ask me that they should study between bouts of writing. Their job then, is to absorb all they can of technique. When another story takes hold of them, they should do the best they can with it, then go back, see how good has been their technique, the presentation of an editorial purpose. But having done all they can objectively, then they should forget technique and be creative once

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more. And so on till the story is finished, as near as one can ever "finish" a story.

You are like a sponge. You soak up a little technique, experience and resulting skill. You grow by using what you have and "learning" what you are ready for. Gradually your instinct expands. Your "secret sense of self-importance" grows bigger and better, if you have the humility and faith to believe in a guiding genius that intends to use you. You cannot swallow the book of writing all in a single gulp. But if you have patience & perseverance, you move forward. That is really what life and writing are all about. They're two strands of a single rope. Cultivate each in turn and in its own way for its own sake. You will find you do better writing, and be a better human being for doing it.

## SOME LATE MARKET REPORTS

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN, Mrs. Trudy Dye, Independence Sq., Philadelphia 5, Pa., was reported in WRITERS NEWSLETTER recently to be discontinuing its Country Gentleman dept. I asked Mrs. Dye if she had any late word about this. Replying for her, Jean Hulburd explained as follows:

"Aside from the staff-written material in the new Country Living section we are looking for ideas concerning building, remodeling, hobbies, travel and kindred subjects we feel will be of interest to the entire farm family.

"In fiction we are most anxious to find—short stories of not over 5,000 words, preferably 3,000. We no longer use serials."

Margaret Schnug is the COUNTRY GENTLEMAN's fiction editor.

REVUE PRODUCTIONS, Jennings Lang, 9370 Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, Cal., also was reported in WNL as a market for TV shows to be done on film. Half-hour dramatic series covering comedy, drama, melodrama & action. WNL said RP willing to go above usual price of \$250 for non-exclusive rights. No limitation as to source as long as it fits. The need: a character that will attract important performers.

Mr. Lang reported to REWRITE: "REVUE PRODUCTIONS has been in the business of producing radio and TV shows for the past 10 years. During the last 2 years we have produced approximately 200 TV shows on motion picture film. All of these have been sold. Many of them have appeared more than once in almost every TV area in the country.

"We are always on the lookout for story material which will make good TV shows. We're mainly interested in material which can be adapted to half-hour program lengths. We have no restrictions other than that we like usually to stay away from horror stories, and material that might prove offensive morally."

## SOME PRIZE CONTESTS

ATLANTIC MONTHLY and Little, Brown & Co., 8 Arlington St., Boston 16, Mass., are once more offering the Atlantic \$5,000 Non-Fiction Award. It was offered every two years—1929-41. No limitations except that the ms. be non-fiction, between 70,000 and 140,000, and be verifiable. Mss. are read immediately and final judging 2½ months after the contest closes: Feb. 1, 1953.

Dodd, Mead & Co. and BOYS' LIFE, 432 4th Ave., NYC 16, offer \$2,000 for a book-length ms. (45,000 - 80,000 words) aimed at boys, 12 - 16 years. Winning ms. will be serialized in the magazine. Closes: Sept. 15, 1952.

Dodd, Mead & Co. also offers \$2,000 for a Red Badge mystery story, 60,000 - 80,000. It closes: Oct. 15, 1952.

Charles W. Follett Award, Wilcox & Follett, 1255 So. Wabash Ave., Chicago 5, Ill., have again announced this annual award for books for children in the 8-12, or 12-16 ages. It closes: Aug. 1, 1952.

Poetry Society of Oklahoma, Myrtle L. Brown, cor. sec., 2143 Stonewall, Oklahoma City, Okla., offers various prizes. These contests are open only to members, but anyone interested in poetry may join. Dues: \$2.00 yearly. Contests this year close: November 30th, and Dec. 5th.

"Paying Poetry Markets", Virginia Randall and Russ Davison, 530 Lowell Ave., Newtonville 60, Mass. \$2.00. This is a very neatly mimeographed brochure. It's sub-divided into an interesting and varied number of categories. The table of contents has some ironic overtones of cryptic advice. Examples of poetry used by key publications are scattered, finer style, throughout the book. A valuable & easily used handbook. A good job.

Add "Batting Average" Column: Ella B. Flagg had 2 poems in Joe Harrington's Boston POST column and one in Top C's the Morning column in the Boston HERALD. Also a prize in an Agnes Carr Writers' Club contest.

ST. JOSEPH, Mae Heggie, St. Benedict, Oregon, is now paying 2¢ a word for fiction & 2¢ for articles, \$25 minimum for 1-pager. A demand exists for clean-cut serious or escapist fiction slanted for adults. Themes suitable for a Catholic book, but not necessarily religious angle. Short shorts: 1,000-1,500 or shorts: 3,000-4,000 words. Articles: 1,000-3,000 words, well written, important & significant topics aimed at average Catholic & American family of today. Photos with articles whenever possible. "We are a new market for picture stories or articles. Attractive rates, and best to query on these. Report in two weeks."

And Mae Heggie is a very nice editor. The whole office reads REWRITE, they tell us.



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### WRITERS LOSE A FRIEND

Last month, just as REWRITE was appearing, Herschel Brickell, editor of the annual anthology of C. Henry "Prize Stories", and the UNH staff handbook, "Writers On Writing", a leading figure in literary journalism, died under tragic circumstances. Only recently he had returned from what must have been an exhausting trip to his beloved Latin America.

I have known Herschel, and Norma, his devoted wife and valued assistant, for almost fifteen years. For many of those years we've worked together at the UNH Conferences. At the one last summer, he was already apparently a sick man, although few of his students and friends were aware of it. His interests were still varied and eager.

While his viewpoint on the short story and mine have followed increasingly contrasting lines of direction, there never has been any doubt in my mind that of the regular annual collectors of the short story, his judgment and taste has been the soundest. His pre-occupation has been with the literary story, a type appealing to the discriminating few. I have been more interested in the better quality "magazine" stories, which while retaining high standards of workmanship and ideas, are capable of catching and holding the attention of large numbers of readers. I am optimistic enough to believe that a story can be just "slick" and yet be adult in its approach and content. It seems to me that upon our ability to develop writers capable of writing this kind of fiction, and readers able to appreciate it, depends much of the future stability of our civilization. In any true democracy we need that form of stimulation.

This was a philosophy that Herschel Brickell not only believed, but practiced wholeheartedly. It was the link that united, and rendered co-equally creative, his interests in literature and Latin America. His eagerness to discover and fertilize young writers was, at the peak of his power, an exciting and refreshing sight. He did much to keep alight and fan, as well as to improve, the spark of imaginative writing in this country. In the doing he never spared himself. There was a quiet drive behind his slow, slouching movements and lazy Mississippi drawl that disavowed completely his tired, tragic death.

### SMALL TOWN WCS BOY MAKES GOOD!

There's a member of the WCS Family, & the N. H. Legislature, who has apparently taken seriously the suggestion we have made about writers making hay while the political pots boil, to mix a metaphor. E. Harold Young has turned his writing and photographic ability to good advantage. "If you saw the TV shows on WBZ (Boston)," he wrote us, "you saw some of my handiwork. I wrote those shows, cast & got them on the air...and perhaps you saw my 'portrait' in LIFE (week before our primaries)." P.S. Harold got 38,310 votes, and is going to the GOP Convention. Not bad!

### AN EDITOR SPEAKS FRANKLY

SENIOR, A.S.Kane, 544 West Colorado Blvd., Glendale 4, Cal. (Note: this is one of that growing number of newer magazines slanted at older people of retirement age, who wish to read about getting the most out of life. It was covered last month in The WRITER. But a number of changes in policy have occurred & we have got them for you direct from the editor himself. As of June 2, 1952.)

"We have decided not to use fiction, not at least for the first few issues. Since those notices appeared, I have been receiving 85% fiction submissions, all very bad.

"Our top length on articles (SENIOR incidentally, is pocket-size, starting at 80 pages and will jump to 96, if all goes well) will be 2,500 words, and I would rather have them 1,000, 1,500 & 1,800. SENIOR is dedicated to the task of convincing people that 'retirement is the time for real enjoyment of life if they look ahead to it instead of approaching it with dread.'

"We want articles pin-pointed, particularized, backed with research and authority; a very small number of the people who have submitted mss. so far, have any concept of this. Rambling generalizations, slush-pile stuff.

"Our rate has gone up already (before first issue appears) to 2¢ a word basic, and higher for the really good stuff. (REWRITE, for your information, has been told what the top rate is, but has been asked to quote this to professionals only, who "know what they're doing". Ed.)

"I'm only interested in first-class writing. To compete, writers have got to be able to sell their articles elsewhere if I don't buy them. In other words, we are aiming for the big circulation class."

Comment. A lot of new magazines begin with high hopes and promises. Mr. Kane, however, has given us off-the-record background factual data that makes it seem as if this magazine is solidly backed and reaching for the big circulation necessary to guarantee publication on a big scale. He himself has had 30 years of commercial experience. Big name Rupert Hughes wrote the lead article for the first issue, which will be given a key test in certain large cities. (We have a statistical summary of this set-up and what takes place afterwards, with ordinary favorable response from the buying public.)

REWRITE goes slow in recommending new magazines. Too often you can tie up mss. without any material advantage from getting "in on the ground floor". We have devoted quite a bit of space to SENIOR because the editor appears to be on top of the ball. Also, the data we are at liberty to supply, taken with the earlier report in The WRITER, afford an insight into the way such a picture changes & shows how writers can analyze it carefully.

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### HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Here are the acceptances reported to us in the past month:

Virginia Morris  
Article: NEW LIBERTY

Joseph Murray Ems  
Poems: Christian Science MONITOR, WINGS  
and CHROMATOMES.

Helen Langworthy  
Article: MICHIGAN STATE JOURNAL, FRONT  
RANGE.

Helen Everts  
Poems: EDUCATIONAL FORUM, SAT. REVIEW.  
Articles: several previously published,  
are being reprinted widely, and to be  
available to blind readers.

Florence M. Davis  
Confession: MODERN ROMANCES.

Mary Taylor  
Crossword Puzzles: JUNIOR LIFE.

Kathryn Wilson  
Article: (Quiz) MODERN ROMANCES.  
Filler: KING FEATURES.

Ruth Peterson Tiff  
Article: CHRISTIAN HERALD.

John E. Pember  
Short Story: (Whodunit) Harle Publications.

Marjorie S. Scheuer  
Poems: CAPE COD COMPASS (2) and CATS Magazine (3).

Note: send in your market notes. It is one way to help us keep up with what editors are buying. Someone else's news may mean a sale for you, and vice versa.

CATS, Raymond D. Smith, Room 1204, House Bldg., 4 Smithfield St., Pittsburg 22, Penn. Uses fiction & articles (2,000 words top) & "help" pieces. Fiction "light" tied to cats and cat-owners. Poetry: 10¢ a line on acc.

WRITERS' WORKSHOP, Mary Otis Davis, Phillips Associated Newspapers, 12 Bank St., San Anselmo, Marin County, Calif., pays \$2 each for 500-word storyettes; serials divided into 500-word chapters, with a synopsis at beginning of each chapter; 500-word articles. Poetry is also used, but no payment. Workshop material is used in three Calif. newspapers. Include self-addressed stamped envelope.

THE ICWAN, David E. Archie, Shenandoah, Iowa, is a new regional non-fiction magazine scheduled for publication in the fall, says the local Des Moines SUNDAY REGISTER. Willard D. Archie, editor & publisher of Shenandoah Evening SENTINEL, is the publisher. David's a former assistant editor on LOCK. Aimed at the home. Regional free lances welcome.

## THE PROSE WORKSHOP

### Closing Dates. The summer schedule:

No. 11. Suspense Problem. Project an atmosphere of Suspense in 100 words. Fiction or non-fiction. This is an exercise that you'll find very valuable. Both for conciseness, & for creating urgency. Closes: July 10.

No. 12. A Dramatic Scenario. Tell us a story you want to write. Suggest the drama and exciting idea so strongly that an editor is likely to exclaim: "I want this!" Tell it in the present tense; use startling summarizing statements, fill in the climax in a line, or give us the top of the dialogue—just a line or two at a high point. In a word, anything to hook your editorial reader.

This is No. 9 rescheduled because no contributor understood what was wanted. Closes: September 10.

The Question Box. Do reputable writers actually mail mss. to typists living in Middle West for "accurate, neat, prompt typing?" I know no reason why they can't. Most writers in the inexperienced class cannot afford to have not-too-well-paid mss. typed. And there is no reason why they cannot type up mss. in a reasonably acceptable fashion. But experienced writers often do save some of the energy they would expend on typing final copies, or retyping soiled drafts, by spotting a competent typist, who may live anywhere. A good many advertising typists are frustrated writers seeking an income to keep them afloat while they are learning.

What are the rules or ethics of submitting and writing the same article for more than 1 publication? The author answers her question quite well. Do it at different times and of course rewrite and slant for a different audience. A reader for a farm magazine, nature or hunting and fishing magazine would, naturally, raise contrasting questions, and so, would seek very different material, & varying emphasis. You've got to be careful not to be careless about hurting competing magazines.

There is no reason why a writer shouldn't rewrite material. But he must understand the different interests of his readers. I have done basically the same article for general readers, booksellers and writers. But these articles differed widely in detail, presentation, and emphasis. You should not submit the same identical ms. to different editors simultaneously. But you could submit to one editor and query another, so you could send it to him immediately, if it is returned by the first editor.

Josephine Young, whose family was written up in FARM JOURNAL and later in READERS' DIGEST, and dramatized on the "Cavalcade of America", told me at the Phila. Regional Conference that she was so green she sent a ms. out in mimeo form. But her material was interesting enough so that one editor requested her to call back the other copies and the other editors wrote her letters saying that the material would have been used if it had not been submitted in multiple. A query and outline instead of the ms. might have worked

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### NEWS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT

Francois Hepp, head of UNESCO's copyright division, dep't. of cultural activities, had an interesting article in the May issue recently of the News Bulletin of the Institute of International Education about International Copyright.

"Next August," he stated, "an intergovernmental conference will be held in Geneva to draft and adopt the text of a new convention. The object of this conference is to include as many countries as possible which are not now under the existing conventions. At the same time it will seek to create more solid bonds between the countries that have signed the Pan American and Berne Conventions in order to give greater protection to writers, artists and scientists."

Stumbling blocks at present are that: (1) many countries in Asia, Europe and Africa do not adhere to any of these conventions; (2) the legal and practical applications of the existing agreements require improvement; (3) there are no ties between the Pan American and Berne Conventions.

Such a convention as the one proposed, M. Hepp says, "while not replacing any of the existing agreements nor limiting a future development, should of course provide fundamental protection of authors on a worldwide basis."

This is something that each writer should consider and do something about. If writers and groups of writers would apply pressure on their congressmen and the U. S. State Department this country would take a more aggressive position in advancing the interests of the Free World in universal copyright. It is a rightful and much needed adjunct for the encouragement of literary and cultural activities.

### IN UNION THERE IS STRENGTH

It has always seemed to us, that an important opportunity for improving relationships in the field of writing is being missed by not giving writers, and their friends, a chance to discuss and express their resulting opinions on vital subjects of interest at writers' conferences.

Think how much weight could be thrown in correcting abuse and unfairness, if hundreds of writers registered opinions.

### THIS IS HOW MSS. ARE READ WITH DESPATCH

Not long ago TIME gave a background sketch of its Books Editor, Max Gissen. His job is to distill the essence of each week's books as they appear, so you can decide which you may wish to read. Of the 10,000 new books a year, he "scans" weekly, 100, or 150 books. In a year he has thumbed through practically every "trade" (general) book. He reviews one book a week, occasionally two and, rarely, three.

"I scan very quickly," he says. I can usually tell in ten minutes whether a book is worth reviewing. For a review, I read very, very slowly. It's one thing to read for simple enjoyment; it's quite another to read for style, meat and accuracy. That isn't to say I don't enjoy reading the books I review. It is not carefree reading, but it can be fun."

He says that he spends disproportionate amount of time on new writers. He first reads 30 or 40 pages to find out how well the new author writes (sheer writing competence. Ed.)

Then he samples the rest of the book to see what the writer's ideas are and what he has "to say". Gissen believes implicitly that such careful screening is one of the most important parts of his job. "It is the cardinal sin of a book reviewer not to spot a fine new writer." He includes editors, too, and although he didn't say so, it is clear that he meant those who read mss. in each & every editorial office.

CORRUPTING young authors with too much money was one of the things people used to hold against the movies. Somebody wrote a book—a first novel like as not—and bingo, a major studio would pay 50 or maybe 75 thousand dollars for it. The surprised and delighted author immediately became so entranced with the financial potentialities of a literary career that he started slanting his next book for a quick film sale, and by the time his third novel appeared you could count him out as far as American letters were concerned.

Softening up of writing talent and the fostering of false ideas of grandeur by overpayment was never a crime that could be laid at the door of publishers. Not till recently, at least. Symptomatic of a changing order is the fact that the soft-cover reprint boys are today making like movie studios. In the intense competition for material, the reprint houses can, without any trouble at all, jockey themselves up to an advance of, say, \$30,000 for a first novel.

What frequently happens afterwards is that both the reprint and the original publishers have a dissatisfied novelist on their hands. Dissatisfied with the original, hard-cover publisher because the first advance from that source was a measly few hundred bucks and the second hasn't been much better; dissatisfied with the reprint publisher because that gentleman, having lost money on Novel No. 1, is unwilling to pay anything like the same amount for No. 2. Along with the disgruntlement a certain artistic demoralization may set in. Determined to command the money he now thinks he's worth, the author becomes more and more concerned with turning out a popular book and correspondingly less with writing according to his own insights and needs. In essence it's the old Hollywood story all over again, but it's illuminating to see that it's not limited exclusively to Hollywood.

Paul S. Nathan, Publishers' WEEKLY. A Vital Danger!

We have given you a digest of this sketch of an editor very definitely for one reason. It shows you how carefully & how quickly your mss. can be read in editorial offices. Writers will immediately rise up & say the works they have spent two years or more on, can't possibly be read that way. Remember, though, that every editor kicks himself and can lose his job if he fails to spot a "fine new writer". The burden of proof is on you. An editorial reader may not read the "big scene" or the part which you believe is the best you've ever done. But that is simply because in his thorough examination of the body, he finds it does not "bleed" in a less important section.

I know that every reader in every editorial office sweats blood and tears to give every ms. its chance. They all make occasional mistakes; they are not human if they don't. But

## REWRITE

out of long experience with the job of putting words together effectively and planning magazine layouts, which readers will skim, yes, and also buy, they build up a definite competence in appraising, and screening out impossible ms. material. Don't forget that if a ms. shows any promise at all, it inevitably is held for further reading. And that a ms. reading department is exceptional where even the decision on the most hopeless, and "not our type" kinds of mss. is not made by at least two readers. (The reason for this: purely defensive and selfish; no publisher, however materialistic, cares to lay himself open to a "squawk". He knows in the long run squawks cost more than playing safe by having two readers.)

Incidentally, Mr. Gissen's standards that he uses for himself and his staff of six are "rules" that every writer might well apply, in his battle to prove that there is living blood in his mss. "Our criteria," says Gissen, "are the same as those that govern the rest of the magazine: keep the cliché out—in phraseology and idea; write a review that is interesting to read for itself; tell whether the reviewer thinks the book is worth the reader's time in reading it, and whether it has anything to say."

Of course one of the distinctions marking the difference between a professional writer and a rank amateur is the ability to spot the empty, imitating phrase or idea and the sort of writing that uses a lot of tiresome words to say "nothing". But if you can make your writing live up to these criteria, the chances are you will not draw for long that cold, impersonal "go to hell" type of rejection slip.

### THIS REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT DECISION

Last month in commenting on the market reports compiled directly from editors' filed replies to questionnaires sent out by the Authors' Guild, I neglected to discuss a very important principle connected with the sale of rights. It can best be illustrated by an actual statement which writers are forced to sign when depositing a check from the magazines published by Fawcett Publications, Inc. (We have selected this one at random. There are other similar statements.) Note especially that it applies both to fiction & non-fiction.

"Received from Fawcett Publications, Inc. the above mentioned sum as payment in full, for the ms. or work entitled — by — and all literary property and other rights therein, including complete publication rights & the right to copyright same in the name of: Fawcett Publications, Inc. and to make editorial changes deemed necessary."

The statement contains further conditions that can be construed as destroying the author's right to object in matters related to his own integrity and questions of good taste. However, the important legal question has to

do with the question: does an editor have a right to revise a ms. in any way he considers "fit", and, if so, does his purchase of a ms. permit him to "edit" the ms. in such a way that the author's artistic and reportorial integrity may be at stake?

Any editor who requests a writer to sign a statement of this kind, is probably thinking only of his own integrity. He should unquestionably have the right to put a ms. into a form that will comply with good usage, house style, policies, etc. No editor should have the right to alter the facts, perhaps jumble them in condensing the ms., or to change the implications and emphasis so as to place the author in a possibly embarrassing position.

Accepted literally, this statement permits an editor to alter radically any ms. and to change the ending of a story, or to restyle the character of a person in a story, without consulting the author, or receiving his cooperation and permission. Possibly, there is no such intention in the mind of Fawcett Publications, Inc. But in that case why must an author sign so drastic and restrictive a clause?

To our mind this is one signal reason why writers must eventually stand together, and defend their rights. The great majority and general average of editors do not abuse the conditions granted in this kind of contract. There have been instances, however, where a writer has seen his ms. edited in a way that he could not approve; but because he signed such a statement, he was powerless to offer any protest. In the early days this was the greatest single reason why some writers refused to sell anything to the movies, while others shut their eyes, inwardly groaned or publicly disclaimed any connection with the abortions using their titles, but having no spiritual or artistic connection with their stories.

It is only fair to say as regards Fawcett Publications, Inc., that several years earlier we published in REWRITE an article from a big name fiction writer, who told of having worked with an editor on one of the Fawcett publications, TODAY'S WOMAN, and who in the friendliest terms told of rewriting her story 22 times in close cooperation with the editor. Fawcett Publications, Inc. certainly did not make use of the power this statement gives them, in this instance. Nevertheless, so long as there exist types of editor in existence, who could and would use a contract of this kind to a writer's decided disadvantage, we don't recommend writers agreeing willingly to such a type of selling contract.

Personal Prize Contests (Poetry). Spring issue of POET'S REED states that Mrs. Ethel E. Harvey, 1451 Glenmore, Baton Rouge, La., offers \$5 for a sonnet on "October". Closes: August 5, 1952. And, Mrs. Mary E. Wall, 177 Ardenwood, Baton Rouge, La., offers \$5 and 2 book prizes for Peace poems. Closes: Oct. 5.



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### GOOD ADVICE!

"You cannot prevent the birds of sorrow from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair." This is an old Chinese proverb that seems to sum up the wisdom in Mrs. Ardis Whitman's superior new book, "How to Be a Happy Woman," which is reviewed today. Mrs. Whitman, who is no Pollyanna or Lady Cooze, feels that the strongest enemy that women of today have is the despair that comes rolling up (like a summer thunder shower?) from nowhere—no matter how poised and balanced they may be. Depression comes to everyone (even men) and this counsellor says that a good technique for dealing with blue days is to explore their sources thoroughly.

"Maybe we have our own individual low points," says Ardis Whitman. "Many can't bear Monday mornings." It has been found that most people are at their worst early in the morning, late at night, on Monday, and in the winter. So perhaps these same people are perfectly lively at noon, at sunset, and on Wednesday afternoons in the springtime! Even men might discover these temperamental high points, and use them as a good time to plant a garden, bet on a horse, or propose to a girl. But whoever heard of a proposal of marriage at high noon? Even if the moon is shining its brightest at 11 p. m., it is of no possible use to a man who is an old cross patch, late at night.

"Often we are struck down by a toy pistol when we imagined we heard the report of a cannon," says Mrs. Whitman, who can pen a pretty good old Chinese proverb her own self, apparently.

what to his moods. He can do routine work at times when his energy is low. He can reserve his high energy times for writing. He can to some extent swim with the current instead of against it, and he can conduct his life and conserve his energy, so that when he writes he will be able to work like an athlete who is trained to racing pitch. Most of all, he can be aware of his weaknesses and make the best

These paragraphs appeared recently in Ole Go Owens' "Bookstall Gossip" column, which she conducts in the Boston POST. (It was previously featured in the Boston TRANSCRIPT, where I conducted it before she did.)

There is much truth, obviously, to this line of thought, and it applies to writers quite as much as to women. A writer is smart to understand his own bodily functions, and plan his work to make effective use of the cycles of energy through which he lives. These form a fairly consistent pattern both by the day & over a longer period.

In a sense we all do a great deal of everyday work under adverse conditions. We have to because we have a living to earn, or only so much free time. But a writer who works independently, so to speak, can adapt himself some-

use of himself that is possible under whatever conditions or "breaks" that may arise. That is really what super athletes with the "great heart" do. Or actors for whom the old cliché, "The show must go on," becomes a reality. They are not actually stronger, more durable than ordinary persons. They may perhaps be gifted with a bit more energy. But largely, it is a question of the competitive spirit and a dedication to the thing that interests and holds them. As a result, they've studied themselves; they understand their own strength and weaknesses. They do not go in to the testings destiny throws at them each day quite so hit-or-miss as others do. They cannot foresee what is likely to happen, but like the baseball player for whom it is instinctive to know what he should do & where he should throw the ball, if it comes to him, they develop more resilience and apply to a given situation almost automatic technique.

Try exploring this physiological and psychological approach to your daily living as well as your writing. You will be surprised how it reduces the waste of energy you used to spend in emotional frenzy and hysterics. You won't "cure" your blue days, because in every person's cycle there are peaks & down periods. But if you appreciate that this is a fact and don't let it depress you, there's a very good chance that you will reduce the effect of your blue days. You will begin to take them in your stride. You will learn to take it easy when you are drained of energy and so not accentuate your periods of devitalized inertia. Thus, you will get more accomplished and tend to lift yourself up.

### TO LOVE SOMETHING IS TO LIVE!

Here is an encouraging thought from a good friend of ours, Rebecca Phillips. She has been very sick, but is getting her strength back. She took time out to use some precious energy to support another writer, who'd been receiving plenty of rejection slips.

"No, Dorothy don't think of quitting. If you never sell a line, and you are sincere in your writing, doing your honest best, trying to PUT SOMETHING INTO those paragraphs that you write, you are enriching your own life; you find out things you never knew before—in your quest for a certain bit of information, or the inspiration you are seeking to put across.

"Honey, don't be discouraged. YOU LEARN, when you write; you enrich your own life, and you make so many wonderful contacts with others through your writing. Many of my best & most lasting friends I would never have known if it had not been for this writing. Thank goodness for writing. It gives you so much, such a bright, shining picture window for your mind and soul to look through—and see things."

Wouldn't you know that Rebecca comes from the sunny South! She never wants me to write about her, but her spirit is heartwarming.

### Can You Use It Well?

By Leslie Dunkin

Some "wisecracker" has remarked, "He who throws mud is losing ground." It is sober truth that he who would gain ground with other people not only avoids throwing mud but also uses well that which is thrown his way.

Few presidents of the United States received as much personal criticism as Abraham Lincoln. It is equally true that few presidents expressed less criticism of others. Lincoln either spoke well of the other person or said nothing. In rising above the personal attacks he developed greater strength of character.

"Maybe he is correct," Lincoln said, when told of a cabinet mem-

ber's criticism of him. "We'll have to look into it."

He looked into it thoroughly, so that he would be of the greatest possible service to his country in that very important hour of history. He increased his efforts to be worthy of the "Well done!" spoken by those who believed in him.

Lincoln welcomed each personal criticism as a channel of instruction and guidance. Even when he knew the critic was mistaken he used the criticism to remind himself to be humbly bigger than his detractor. Each stone thrown at him was used to strengthen the structure of his own character.

### GOOD BUSINESS

## REWRITE

## NEWS AT WCS HOUSE

Bill wrote most of REWRITE early in June, this month, in anticipation of his teaching at the Philadelphia Regional Conference. We expect to have a considerable report of the doings at this large conference, now 4 years old. We also hope we shall have gathered an interesting assortment of editorial reports in Philadelphia. These will be printed in the August issue. It all should be interesting.

Elva is taking a month's vacation from her monthly column. This is the first respite in 7 years for her. She wrote her first column in November, 1945, when Billy 'Gee was only 3 months old.

Elva says not to let the poets think they can rest on the Workshop! Reprinted below is the poem that will be analyzed by Elva, and we hope, a lot of friendly poets, in August. We have printed it twice, so that more members of our reading audience will have some opportunity to comment on it. It will be reprinted again in the August issue. Also, we are doing something new this month by printing in this issue the poem that will be used in the—October Workshop, thus giving an opportunity for more intensive study & criticism of this poem.

Poem for August.

## STORM FLOWER

By Helen Nye

Bold, frowned the cliff on angry sea,  
And held aloft the stalwart light.  
The wild waves tossed relentlessly  
While somber clouds drew fast the night.

She longed for April's joys again.  
As whining winds sang summer's knell.  
And icy fingers of the rain  
Shattered the faded nimmerl.

Remember: we pay \$1 for each ms. used and all comments are forwarded to the authors. A helpful, constructive comment must accompany every ms. submitted for possible use. Deadline for comment: July 10th. But please help your fellow neighbor and member of the Family by sending in a criticism anyway. It may be your turn next time.

Room for—October Workshop.

### GRIEF'S DESOLATION

A wind came sighing through the trees,  
In the wake of storm and knew no rest.  
The grass salaamed on bended knees  
And sent its supplication to the west.

The horizon was dark with somber clouds.  
The sun went listlessly over the sill  
Of night, and left in its wake tinged  
  shrouds.

which faded to a gray and murky frill. →

The INSTRUCTOR, Mary E. Owen, Dansville, N. Y., is now paying "all story writers 30 days after the returned contract is received."

## NEWS ALONG THE MARKET FRONT

THOUGHT ACTION, Roy Hessen, Jefferson Ave., Amityville, N. Y., sent out (June) a revised bulletin of its payments on acceptance. A market for 100-word "featurettes", it claims to be the "highest paying market in the Little magazine field", after its third acceptance. Its editors certainly maintain a policy of developing newsworthy items of interest to writers.

Anonyme Workshop, Leta Meston, Contest Editor, 32 Edgewood Ave., Mill Valley, Cal., is having no more nation-wide activities until fall, but 25¢ sent with your name and address and a return, stamped envelop, will bring a notice of the next activity. It is a worthwhile opportunity to compete for prizes. And many of the "also rans" are sold elsewhere.

From the final bulletin of the above workshop we learn that "Theft by post office employees of money addressed to various organizations has become so widespread, in California, that special teams of undercover investigators have been assigned in an attempt to curb it. More than a score of postal employees have been arrested for stealing letters containing cash enclosures. Postal officials urge persons making contributions by mail to use checks whenever possible."

This is a disgraceful condition for which the present federal government must naturally accept full responsibility. Partly, it is a result of political patronage, but Congress is partly to blame by refusing to allow the hiring of any permanent employees. It's time the biggest business in the world was put on a business basis and the integrity of a great heritage of service was restored.

Greeting Card Industry. The Federal Trade Commission has issued complaints of pricefixing against American Greetings Corp., Associated Greeting Card Distributors of America, and The National Association of Greeting Card Publishers. The first firm is accused of buying up and junking cards sold by competitors; the others of using combined "buying power to obtain preferential concessions" from their suppliers of materials, or forcing special terms of sale on their dealers, tending to restrict the sale of competitors. The last firm specializes in direct mail or house-to-house selling.

Friendship Press, and the Joint Commission  
on Missionary Education of the Nat. Council  
of the Churches of Christ in America, moved  
recently to 257 4th Ave., NYC 10.

Cont'd from previous column

And in the wood no sound was heard,  
Through the cloying damp of rain-soaked  
leaves.

Except one weary note from a lonely bird:  
Then all was quiet as a heart that grieves

(Sharpen your hatchets!) Clarence O. Adams

## REWRITE

### BE CAREFUL IN SENDING PICTURES

There is a difficult problem for writers, who sell illustrated articles. It concerns the question of whether to send the prints, with the article, or wait for an O. K. The prints do undoubtedly help to sell a "weak" piece. But there is always that question of tying up or even losing some expensive, and sometimes hard to replace property.

With an editor you know or have done business with before, there is usually no hard job in deciding. But some big offices don't take as much care as they should, and small offices, especially those that pay on publication, may hold prints for several years. A number of complaints have been filed with us recently. Particularly regarding markets in the filler feature field, where mss. aren't returned and sometimes not reported on, unless accepted, even though you send "return postage".

A safe rule would seem to be never to send prints to this type of market until the editor displays some interest. You can write a brief note stating that you have good pix and will be glad to send them upon request. You can also point out that even though you may have taken the prints yourself they represent an out-of-pocket outlay. Few decent editors expect a writer to tie up ten dollars' worth of negatives and prints for some \$5 or \$10 filler story.

There is also the problem of whether your photos are to be returned to you or someone else. I have done personality pieces, where a hard-to-get picture was supposed to be returned to the subject. Many editorial & publishing offices have an ex-newspaperman for the executive head. These chaps usually are keen to build up their files. It is easy enough to make a copy of the original. Nevertheless, you will find in some cases an editor will just naturally hold onto a print, unless you make the effort to get it back. A writer should always be clear as to whether he is selling a negative, or merely one time use of a print. As I have indicated above, a print can be reproduced; but if the plate or negative is retained by the writer, the reuse under legitimate and not directly competitive circumstances is generally permissible.

This whole matter is a complex one. It has always seemed to me, that personalities and character are more important than "rights" and rules. If you are dealing on one hand with an editor of probity, you can safely let him use, and pay for photos according to a general practice in his office—whereas on the other hand, if the policies are lax and casual, you should be pretty certain you understand where your rights end. A writer who is unknown, has to accept whatever he can get. A more

professional author can dictate to some extent the terms. But all writers have the opportunity to accept or reject the terms and these are often ascertainable in advance. A writer is foolish to sell himself too cheaply. Unless he is hard up, he shouldn't bite too easily on the insignificant pay-on-publication markets.

And remember that a dignified, straightforward approach is at once the most disarming and the best defense of an honest position. The editors who are too big for their pants or interested in pulling your leg, are relatively few in number. If they hurt you, you can check them off your list. And also, you can report them to the Authors' Guild, or a magazine like REWRITE. We have a CENTRAL MS. MARKETS FILE, where we keep such information available, and pass it along to others. We have found that often times an editor fails to realize how he is treading on a writer's toes. When it is explained to him, he gladly corrects his fault.

If he proves unwilling to treat the other chap as he would like to be treated himself, he is not likely to be a good market. The army police have a good rule, if you become involved with such characters: Ask them, Tell them, Make them! If you can't make them, it is usually better to write them off as a bad risk. It is easier to save your energy, and write one, two or more stories in the time, that you would waste "feuding". In the long run any editor or writer who is "mean", has only himself to blame if he writes off confidence in himself on the part of others. A good writer dips from a never-failing well. There are more ideas waiting to be worked up than he can possibly handle in a lifetime.. So he can afford to "average up" a few bitter experiences.

### NEWS OF TWO MARKETS

**YOUNG PEOPLE**, The Am. Baptist Publication Society, 1701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia 3, Pa., recently (June 9th) sent a form letter to its subscribers, stating that new equipment permits the use of two colors. And beginning with the July issues, **YOUNG PEOPLE**, and other **ABPS** publications will be shipped once a month in one shipment, thus simplifying mailing procedures and reducing costs.

**FOCUS**, Arnold Hano, 350 5th Ave., NYC, has a number of filler departments that pay small sums:

**WHERE ARE THEY NOW?** Names & date, about people who have been out of the public eye. \$5.00.

**THE SNEER**. Names of persons of "general repugnance worthy of a sneer." \$10.00.

**THE CHER**. The opposite type. \$10.  
News Items. Strong current, human interest with a twist ending. \$5.  
You need to study the book here!

#### **Know a Money-Maker?**

Do you know any fellows who have worked out a deal with Dad to do hauling with the farm truck? Or some boy who is running a produce stand in front of his place? Or some other fellow with a profitable idea?

If you know any such, tell us about it in a letter. We'll pay for any that we use. Address: "Spendin' Money," *Farm Journal*, Philadelphia 5, Pa.

The June issue.

## REWRITE

### THE FEATURE ARTICLE IS LIMITLESS

One of the leading characteristics of the feature article is that it is literally all-inclusive. There is hardly any subject having some connection with people, groups and places that is not susceptible of being made into a good feature with a little ingenuity and planning. This year the Olympic Games—to mention only one outstanding event—is a ready-made subject. One of our friends featured her neighbor's blueberry plantings. A town's 100th anniversary of incorporation, a local historic site, an annual festival, or town custom; these are but a few of the innumerable possibilities. What is commonplace to you, may be of news-peg interest to your state or regional magazine. See how many of the digest magazine features are merely the local feature played up as a national novelty.

Writers should be alert for the unobserved novelty that passes unnoticed in a small or large community. There are dozens of interesting features buried in the displaced, resettled families that are finding homes in our midst. Our local paper carried a feature article the other night about a man who was formerly the bodyguard for the Empress Zita of Austria. Many of these stories cannot be told right away. Some for protective or personal reasons. Others may be only the basis of general information or later fiction. On the night of the "Sugar" Ray Robinson-"Rocky" Graziano fight a casual question on my part touched off a chap in our community whom I've known slightly for two years. In an hour he told me about his childhood in a dozen lumber camps, of his fighting 85 professional fights in the same weight as the two men I have mentioned above. I said probably a dozen words to his 7,000. Truly it was an education. It opened up a whole new world to me. It suggested dozens of big scenes.

You can always work up a sketch of an interesting person, either as an interview or personal feature. The same can be done about an institution, old house or the scene of an early historical "event". A friend of mine featured an Indian massacre at the site of a new bridge to be dedicated the next day by the governor.

The unusual hobby can be worked up both for local and national readers. (Care should be taken as to which should be released first, so that one story won't be spoiled.) Informational yarns that introduce young readers to a bright new world are easy to get rid of. Collect data about several famous trees, or bells or almost anything else and you automatically have a feature. There is literally no end to features articles.

### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

The box which we have reprinted at the bottom of this page points up a change that is taking place in American journalism. It is, however, more a mechanical change than a reversion to local talent. The sale of "boiler plate" has dropped, but look at the paper in your small town, city or county. Note how much of it, especially on the page that features material for women and the home, is syndicated; how much of the news carries an AP or other wire service identifying line. I think it is fine to have the world right at your door. But I would like to see regional writing, as well as news and features, given a wider play.

REWRITE pleads no cause for "protected" and vanity writing. We do think one of the best possible influences in American life is the local or regional newspaper and magazine actively interested in regional writers & the activities of their communities. We are seriously concerned over the ever increasing & dangerous spread of "one paper" towns where the single paper and often the radio station is controlled by a single owner, who has purchased and suppressed competing units. It's even worse when such ownership is vested in a large chain of papers or radio stations. A situation like that is bad for the community and worse for the local writers.

We believe writers' clubs everywhere need to stand up and work for progressive development of local talent for the benefit of a whole community or region. Local newspapers and magazines should be urged,

and encouraged, to start writers from the region on the way to larger opportunities. Writers' clubs might well offer the prizes for the best regional news written and published locally, that the local paper sponsors. They might persuade regional editors to originate and pay for local features or columns. The idea of encouraging this by the advertising they pay for. Some local writers, high school, or older writers could be trained through staff responsibilities.

It is nice to have big names and big city service even in a small town. But too much of it induces a parallel disease similar to that which has afflicted our athletics to the point, where thousands of active men, women and children have become passive spectators. It is good to see the widespread development of the "little leagues" in baseball. We need something of the same order for writers. If we become a nation of doers, even if only good amateurs, professionals will give us better writing.

### The editor's friend fades away

Since Civil War days, weekly newspapers have bolstered their local news content by purchasing "patent insides" or "ready-print" (pages printed on one side and left blank on the other).

By using readyprint thousands of weeklies were able to give their 20 million readers Washington and international news, feature stories, big name columnists (Drew Pearson, Grantland Rice, etc.), fiction and religious news.

Only supplier is Western Newspaper Union, which for more than 80 years has been selling readyprint at \$16 per 1,000 for four pages. It also supplies mats and "boilerplate" (news and features on press plates).

**Insides' End.** By the end of this month, WNU has announced, it will be out of the readyprint business. Reasons: (1) "rising costs of newsprint, production and distribution," (2) a steady decline in customers. Last year only about 15% of America's 10,000 weeklies still used readyprint.

Walter A. Sheard, WNU's Washington representative, explained last week: "Most weeklies don't need this kind of service anymore. They are getting more modern equipment all the time, eliminating the need for preprinted pages."

**The PATHFINDER** (March)



## REWRITE

### YOU CAN LEARN FROM A GREAT WRITER

I have just finished a very pleasant leisurely reading of John Marquand's "Melville Goodwin, USA". I do not have too much time, aside from ms. reading, to read. When I do read, particularly a book with meat in it, I like to read slowly, first for the story, & then for the technically interesting points along the way. Possibly I am a story-teller's reader, but I am old fashioned enough to enjoy giving myself up to the illusion of reality that is to be had in a little world of make believe. And at the same time I like to savor the writer's skills and problems. For me, every sense is alert to absorb all that there is in a book for me.

I labor this matter of reading because although I have been trained to pick the contents of a book by looking at its exterior, its lay-out, general make-up, etc., and from skimming over the type with swift photographic sweeps, the other type of reading is the ideal kind we should all master, if we wish to become better writers and good reporters of the human scene.

Having read "Melville Goodwin, USA", I am going to comment upon it briefly because as I have said on another page, it is my feeling that John Marquand is one of the greatest living craftsmen with words. I believe that together with Booth Tarkington, and W. Somerset Maugham, he has few equals in sheer effortless virtuosity in handling words. Few of us ever succeed in conveying exactly that shade of meaning his imagination visualizes in the white heat of composition. But all of these men possess that skill to a very high degree. This is not to say that I necessarily consider these men the outstanding literary lights of their day. Although I think that much of what the critics tell us is the best in "Literature" today will be forgotten and considered unreadable a few centuries hence. This is because many of the so-called critics make the very easy error of mistaking uncommon ideas for great writing. A man's imaginative and thought processes, on the one hand, are one thing, his ability to express them, give them memorable form & substance is something else again.

Marquand, Tarkington and particularly the last of these Maugham, are first & foremost writing men. All their lives they have dispensed entertainment through the "magazine" story. Ideas have had to be subordinated to story and the practical limitations of their medium. But the fact remains that these men have not lost sight entirely of theme, significance, and at their best for sheer ability to handle the mechanics of their craft, they make some of the literary authors look like awkward and even, occasionally, slovenly laborers with words.

Marquand's book about a two star general, depicting as it does the inner mind of that military hierarchy which cultivates Brahmin-

like caste among its devotees, is not, I believe, great literature in the best sense of the word. But it is great writing. Any man could be proud to muster such surgeon's skill with the scalpel. Few critics, or teachers, could approach within gunshot range of it.. And that is why I say that all of us who desire to be judged not as literary authors but as writers, should read this book & inwardly digest it. For we can learn much from it because Marquand, above everything else, respects his craft. He is an honest workman.

The most obvious characteristic of the novel is its journalistic sense of timeliness. It was written before Gen. Eisenhower's upsurge of political strength, yet within the shadow of the Cold War. It gives every American a reportorial picture of what it could mean to have a general occupy the White House, particularly in this day and age. Again, it warns us in whose hands our freedom of speech and much of our thinking today rests. That is not a pleasant potentiality. To writers, who dream roseate dreams of financial independence at the hands of the movies, radio, or TV, it offers the other side of the coin in the form of the intricate slave dance any trained seal must perform if he is to curry favor with the momentarily reigning monarch of the cash registers.

But "Melville Goodwin, USA" is interesting to writers for much more factual & technical reasons. Marquand's use of a story-teller to recount the life and story of the General, & at the same time live a parallel story of his own, is a very valuable device involving both form and viewpoint. Writers should study it carefully. I, for one, do not think he carried it off entirely successfully. It drags towards the end, wears thin, and is in part responsible for the ending seeming anticlimactic and at best a weak compromise. There for the first and only time Marquand apparently loses control of his characters.

Marquand's handling of the simple, journeyman narrative which every novelist and many short story writers have to use to skim over the dull spots, is always interesting. An inexperienced writer would: (1) fall back into reams of dull introspection; or (2) "tell" by letting the author step into the story & comment didactically to the reader in an aside that would kill the illusion. Marquand manages it better. Here are the opening sentences: "I knew nothing of what General Melville A. Goodwin had done in Berlin until I read of his feat in my own script shortly before going on the air one evening in October 1949. (Notice the intimate style. Ed.)

The novel is worth studying for the varying manner in which Marquand introduces his continuous series of flashbacks. The story is a long, slowly developing one. Whether a writer agrees that it is uniformly satisfying or not, he can learn a great deal if he studies carefully (1) how Marquand cut up & changed the chronological order of the Gen-

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eral's life; and (2) how a sense of urgency is built into the transition of each flashback, so that (1) we readers want to explore this particular chapter in the General's life as against any other; and (2) we feel it is the inevitably right one at this point in the story chain.

What really happens of course is that the author forges two chains: the dramatic line of the story and the chronological line the General's life took as it unrolled. Technically, one cannot help admiring the ingenious way that Marquand plays one of these two lines against the other, like cross ruff in Bridge. The story progresses chapter by chapter, and at the same time the long, chronological line of the General's life gradually is filled in piece by piece, and at most surprising and interestingly unexpected positions in the line. Backwards and forward, but always with the inevitability of skillful technique and artistic design.

Another amazing ability that Marquand has command of at all times is the ability constantly to reveal character through the dialogue. He does not "tell" how his characters think and feel; he "shows" it in the dialogue. He rarely uses emotionalized tags—he does not need to because emotion is inherent in the lines themselves. Just as in the marvellous descriptions of action. Descriptions that reveal character with skill, and at the same time amused, dry irony. Here is an example.

Dottie, the worldly widow, who has caused Gen. Melville Goodwin to threaten to create a scandal in the Army and leave his wife, is lunching with Sid, the radio news commentator and the latter's wife Helen. What Helen thinks about women like Dottie is not quite printable. Here is Sid's observation of the two women meeting at the front door.

"Helen and Dottie were being very civilized indeed. There was no rough stuff, scarcely an awkward moment. There were no round-house swings or smacks of gloves. There were no cuts from glancing blows. They were so glad to see each other, so fond of each other, so mutually admiring that it was hard to believe what Helen had said about Dottie. A mutual bond had drawn them together, because they were both so fond of me—Dottie merely in her tender, maternal way. (Dottie in the beginning had overlooked and then, later, after it was too late, wanted Sid for her own in her strong, possessive way. Ed.) Occasionally they discussed me as though I were not present, but also they had so much to say to one another. Dottie could always see everything without appearing to notice, and I knew she was not missing anything."

It's sure-fire stuff, a nasty-nice scene—between two women in love with the same man who hate each other. It may be a little unfair to Helen, the "nice" woman. But notice the overtones, the emphasis on the emotion-

al inner relations rather than the physical action. It is reflection, even introspection of a sort. But it points up the scene which is to come. The overtones arise from all of the scenes between Sid and Dottie previously; from Sid's discontent with his life and the knowledge that Dottie would give a good right arm to be in Helen's place. Finally, note the language of Sid's thoughts, words, I believe, richly characteristic words that an ex-newspaperman would naturally use—the images he would instinctively think of.

This long luncheon episode is handled very skilfully. Every writer should read it, see for himself how Marquand reveals relentlessly Dottie's insecurity and points up the suspense as to the ultimate outcome. In a sense the reader through Marquand's use of a partly omniscient viewpoint, knows more than any of the characters. Yet the reader reads on, excited by curiosity as to how the embarrassing, semi-tragic scene will work itself out. There is real suspense, and the story's line of interest is neatly punched home again and again by such telling plot directional signs as this:

"By now there was no doubt that Dottie was deeply worried about something, and obviously it was something which she did not wish to discuss in front of Helen." By this device, I think you will agree, the reader can actually see the progress of the dramatic scene shaping up. Marquand blazes the trail.

Now here is not the climax of the dramatic sequence, but one of the series of them. For all its seeming excess of emotion, there is clean, thrifty restraint in the writing. And beautiful integration between the prose narration and the dialogue. The thing moves quietly resistlessly. And there is not an emotional tag in the whole passage to intensify the reader's feeling. There doesn't need to be for the reader is right there, experiencing the inner pangs for himself. It may not be literature or "great" writing, but it is undeniably very effective writing.

"As soon as we reached the library, I knew exactly what Dottie thought of the whole layout, and it placed an undue strain on my loyalty to see her gazing superciliously at the English gentleman's books. All at once she put her arm through mine, as though we both were lonely.

"Oh, my God," she said, 'poor Sid.'

"I could not think of an appropriate answer. I wanted to be loyal to Helen, who had tried so hard with that library, but I felt my own self-pity.

"Poor Sid," she said again. 'This is not what you ever wanted, is it, darling?'

"Not exactly," I answered, 'but it doesn't really matter. It's a minor detail, Dot.'

"I might not have had everything, but I had

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more than she would ever have, and at least I knew that you had to give up some part of yourself to get anything you wanted.

"I know it is," she said. "Sid, I am awfully glad for you, I really am....And the patter of little feet. This won't be such a bad place for the children's hour."

"I wished she did not see everything, and know everything. There was never any intellectual privacy when I was with her."

"All right," I said, "That's one way to put it, Dot."

"Damn you," she said, "don't try to be slick about it. All right, I'm jealous of you. God, all this burns me up. I hate you and—still I'm glad for you. How the hell did it ever work this way? Oh, God, I'm so unhappy, darling."

"Then she threw her arms around me & pressed her head against my shoulder—but not the way she had with Farouche (the dog). It was an excellent thing that Helen was not there."

"Oh, Sid," she sobbed, "Oh, God!"

"Don't," I said, "don't, Dot."

"It was useless to say 'don't.' There was that destructive driving force inside her. No man, nothing, would ever answer her desire, and unfortunately we both knew it."

"Sid," she said, "please hold me for just a minute. You've got to help me, Sid."

"Help you about what, Dot?"

"She pushed herself away from me, but she continued to hold my hand."

"All right," she said, "all right. Of course you know what...That God-damned brass-hat general of yours, Major General Melville A. Goodwin..."

"I had never seen her look so empty or defeated. Her words had all her old speciousness, but they had taken a lot out of her."

There you see a character revealed pitilessly, yet with compassion. Possibly the "sids" be come too iterative. But in all other respects, the simplicity, the timing and the intimate and emotional quality are that of a skilled craftsman. He knows his business with words as few other writers do today. An inexperienced writer would do well surely, to take that scene, indeed, the entire book apart and study it for the many facets of skill lurking behind Marquand's quiet style and slow telling of an exciting story. May you do as well!

### Setting up a forum

1. You can charter a Forum in your town by lining up a handful of potential members. Fifteen are plenty for a good argument.

2. If you prefer, you can become a non-participating member—eligible to express opinions in Facts Forum polls and receive Facts Forum material—without belonging to an actual group.

3. For information, write to Robert H. Dedman, president, Facts Forum, 720 Mercantile Securities Bldg., Dallas, Tex.

Good practice for writers!

## THIS MONTH'S BOOKS

**THE EAGLE & THE ROOTS.** Louis Adamie. Doubleday & Co. \$5.00. This is an exciting book—if only because the author met violent death before he finished it, and because it has a detailed picture of Tito by a Slovene, whose love of his native land remained a strong, a motivating part of his character through 40 years of living and writing in America. It is a difficult book to read because the style is often poetic, and the overtones aren't familiar to many of us Americans. But if we are to understand the chaotic politics of Russia and the Balkans, and our own position in reference to same, and the world at large, we should read it.

**FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN ENGLAND.** Fredrick S. Siebert. Univ. of Illinois Press. \$7.50. A scholarly book covering the years 1476-1776, by a man who in 1930-40 shared in the preparation of briefs concerned with our freedom of the press under the constitution of the U. S. This then, is a study of the foundations of our own constitutional guarantees.

**WRITING BOOKS FOR BOYS & GIRLS.** A Young Wings Anthology. Ed. Helen Ferris. Doubleday & Co. \$2.98. This is a curious and charming book. 216 juvenile authors over a period of twenty-three years have written delightful short essays on how they came to write books that were picked by the Junior Literary Guild, is not so much an instructional book as one for picking up at odd moments. The essays originally appeared in the Guild's monthly publication. We find members of the WCS Family and one winner of a REWRITE prize. In a word, it is full of friends, both writers and editors.

**NOTE:** buy all your books through WRITERS' BOOK CLUB. You will save money, earn a Book-Dividend, and help us to publish REWRITE, & to create a broader market for writers' Books.

The WCS Circulating Library saves you money. \$2.00 per year, plus postage both ways.

## DO YOU NEED ENVELOPS?

Although we have not listed our ms. envelopes recently, we still have plenty of a few sizes:

20 Each (One fold) \$1.00. Plus  
(6 1/2 x 9 1/2 & 7 x 10)  
25 10 x 13 (Flat) \$1.00. Post-  
age.

Postage: send 50¢. We will "make change" in additional envelopes.

Our envelopes are highest grade in kraft (brown) paper. Same stock, same distinction as the envelopes in which you receive REWRITE. We also have about 150 two-fold envelopes. First come, first served. We're closing out our stock.

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### PROPAGANDA IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

In a recent reprint from the Department of State Bulletin I found a statement that applies to writing.

"Propaganda is 90 percent deeds and only 10 percent words. Alone it is not a substitute either for policy or action. If we do the right things and make them known to others in an intelligent way, we succeed in our propaganda task."

Howland H. Sargeant  
Assist. Secretary for Public Affairs

A great many writers believe that if they join enough clubs and publicize their small triumphs in obscure magazines, they will automatically become writers. That is the real attraction of vanity publication. It seems to make one Somebody. Would-be writers would do well to do some soul-searching occasionally and decide whether they really wish to be writers, or merely be admired as personalities.

Writing is a hard, lonely job. Most of us do not do nearly enough of it to become actually fluent and imaginative in mind as well as word-flow. There is a beginning, but the end comes only when you close up the machine for the last time. In between the most that can be said when you finish one story or article is that you have made yourself a little more fit to do the next one, and so on, ad infinitum.

The ordeal is the same throughout, and for everyone, be he great or small. You search, feverishly, for an idea; you kindle all the enthusiasm you can muster; & bring to bear as much technique as you can. If you are lucky you sell it, and then you have to start all over again. There is that void when you wonder if you will ever write again. But presently you begin to fill up, an idea suggests itself, you commence to sweat, and.... Happy the man or woman whose lamp of enthusiasm & plus energy burns brightly; whose writing organizes itself gradually into a specialized program that continues over the years.

Editors inevitably judge you by what your record shows you have accomplished. That's inevitable. Some are more snobbish than the next fellow, just as writers often are! But if you think you can fool them, or a reader, by a lot of phoney handles to your name, you are mistaken. In the long run you seek your own level, just as water does. If you write good, solid stuff, you are better off eventually than the flashy performer who spends a lot of time currying favor and making important contacts.

I have known writers who consider it very important to contact editors and have an in in every office. They do this long before a single worthwhile piece slips from the type writer. What utter foolishness! When you've got a piece you think is good for an editor

then, and then only, is the time to write a brief note giving him as many good reasons, in your opinion, why it is a good piece and why you think you are capable of doing good work. I have run into very few editors, who when a serious craftsman approaches them and tries earnestly to sell them a constructive, worthwhile proposition, do not stop long enough to listen to see if there is an "idea" in it for them.

And that's the time to display quietly and unostentatiously all the "handles", the good handles, to your name that you can. An editor has to think in terms of competence. It is only natural for him to appraise writers who proposition him; he does it instinctively because he is a custodian of very valuable space. He cannot afford to make mistakes and fill his pages with shoddy, half-baked, or inaccurate ideas and writing. And because many of the writers he meets in person or in his mail are unknown to him, he has to judge them by what they have done.

But any smart editor can tell the difference between solid gold references and gilt ones. Just the same as after a few moments' conversation or close analysis of a ms., he can tell whether the person or ms. lives up to the good references. Plenty of phoney or second rate writers have managed to wriggle their way into a great newspaper or magazine at least once in some obscure department. It is unfortunate that the incompetents and the phoneys, like the Communists in the propaganda war, have the best appreciation of the importance of good handles. They see that they get them and—use them!

Which brings us back to that letter I suggest at the top of this column that you inscribe to the editor. I have never found it poor strategy to state objectively and without a lot of fulsome adjectives why you are sending out a special ms. to an editor. It helps him to see whether a ms. has anything in it for him. And to decide whether you're right or wrong. This is, of course, contrary to what most of the textbooks say. They tell you never to waste an editor's time writing him a letter; let the ms. sell itself. That has always seemed to me a little like salesmen ringing a doorbell and then dropping an automobile, refrigerator or vacuum cleaner into the lap of the lady of the house and silently waiting for her to say: "I want this and how much does it cost?" When you ring a doorbell (and that is what we all do, whenever we send out a ms.) it never does harm, it seems to me, to state your business in a business-like, yet warm, enthusiastic manner. Living, like writing, is based on effective, imaginative communication.

And so if propaganda is 90% action, it is also successful only when you have the best stuff there is to sell, and don't try to oversell the customer, nor on the other hand, neglect the amenities of friendly, thoughtful consideration. Editors are human!